irrigated, and the Jagjag and the Khabur could never irrigate such an area. Irrigation is the second factor involved in determining whether the land is cultivable or not.

II. Qada of Dijla

Turning to the Qada of Dijla, we find that the entire region has sufficient rainfall, two rivers and many springs in the villages. In fact, the abundance of rainfall in the northeastern part of the Qada known as Jazirat ibn Amr, makes the growing of summer crops hazardous because the hot, dry period is too short.

The lower part of the Qada, from Tal Koshak to Dāmir Kapu, is similar to the Qada of Qamishli. The land is flat and precipitation, though relatively abundant, does not compare with the more mountainous regions of Dijla.

III. Qada of Qamishli

The Qada of Qamishli with the lower part of Dijla, extends from Tal Koshak on the Iraki border, comprising the cities of Qamishli, Amuda, Derbassiya, to Ras el Ain on the Khabur which belongs administratively to Hassakeh. This region, some 200 kms. in length along the railway line and the Turkish border, is the best developed and most productive of the Jazirah.

In point of cultivability, it is divided into two parts:

1. A region bounded by the railway and a line running about forty kms. south and parallel to it, from the river Rad to Tal Brak to Tal Tamr on the Khabur.
2. The region south of this fictitious line.

This division is based on the amount of rainfall and the experience of farmers during the last twelve years. It is certain that the further one goes from the Turkish mountains, the less is the rainfall. That is why Tal Brak, about 40 kms. south of Qamishli, is considered the last profitable area for rain-fed farming. In the last few years when tractor cultivation expanded greatly and lands became scarce, new farmers cultivated the lands south of the parallel line down to Hassakeh and to a point about 40 kms. north of Rakka, and learned at their own expense that it does not pay unless the crop is barley and is carried on as a sideline to a principal enterprise in the northern regions.

A vast area lies south of the Rad to the Iraki border toward the Sinjar Mountains. Farmers have been prevented from cultivating

it because of bloody disputes between the Shammar and Tay tribes. The land is poorer than in the north and the rainfall is much scarcer. Farmers who managed to plant barley on the fringes of the disputed land in the bad year of 1951 lost heavily. It is improbable that an average year would give much hope of profit.

Ras el Ain, though on the railway line, has less rainfall than Kamishli, Amuda, or Dirbassiya because the mountains recede north into Turkey. Dry farming is profitable less than 20 kms. south of Ras el Ain.

IV. The Khabur Valley

The Khabur river, though rising in Turkey, is fed by springs in Ras el Ain and flows southward for about 150 kms. within the Jazirah before it enters the Mohafaza of the Euphrates below Markada.

For about 20-30 kms. below Ras el Ain, the land is used for cereals, mainly barley, with varying degrees of success. But south of this area and down to Hassakeh, dry cultivation becomes risky. South of Hassakeh and to the east and west, dry cultivation becomes entirely out of the question because rainfall, already insufficient at Hassakeh, falls off sharply.

The inadequate rainfall is offset to a certain extent by the possibility of irrigation from the Khabur. Traces of old dams are apparent in several places, and canals which carried the waters from the dams are visible. History and legend leave no doubt that the valley was much more extensively exploited in former times than it is now.

Recently, when the price of rice rose during the War, farmers from the cities of Jazirah in search of irrigated land, began renting lands along the Khabur and installing motors and pumps. The necessary outlay of capital for any project of adequate size was substantial, not less than LS 150,000, and the price of rice fell after 1946, so that perhaps not more than fifty irrigation projects existed up to 1949. It remained for the cotton boom of 1951 to boost this number to around 200 pumps.

The average size of pumps is 8" and the area irrigated by a pump of this size is around 500 dunums (125 acres). On some projects, where land is available, this area for summer crops is supplemented by an area twice this size in wheat and barley. But lands on both sides of the river rise steeply and rarely can an owner of an irrigation project find enough lands to use the pumps

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162 were left in the Jezirah district. An additional 5,000-6,000 Jews
167 emigrated at the beginning of 1948, leaving a total of about 9,000, with 4,500 in Aleppo, 4,000 in Damascus, and 500 in the Jezirah district. Further emigration took place that year; and it is estimated that there are now fewer than 6,000 left in the whole country.

This exodus was the culmination of many years of intimidation, material decline, and moral isolation. The smaller community in Damascus had always been poor. About 80 per cent earned their living as labourers and pedlars; approximately 15 per cent were able to maintain a slightly higher standard; while only 5 per cent were able to make a good living, mostly in commerce. The Aleppo community had in bygone days been prosperous and had been an active and important element of the city's once flourishing commerce. The rapid deterioration of conditions, however, made itself felt particularly strongly among the Jews of Aleppo; and since the wealthy were the first to leave the country, the remainder were impoverished even more swiftly.

197 Although knowledge of French is widespread among educated
563 Jews, the every-day language of the majority is either Arabic or Ladino. There are two *Alliance Israélite Universelle* schools, one in Aleppo and the other in Damascus. Since the convocation of the first Parliament in December, 1936, there has been one Jewish representative in the Chamber of Deputies. He was, it is true, allowed to retain his seat even when persecution of the Jews reached its height. But, isolated as he was in a sea of feverish hostility, there was little he could do to alleviate the situation.

In 1945, a meeting of Islamic religious leaders in Damascus, presided over by the Mufti of Damascus, sent a telegram to the Allied Governments, threatening that a Holy War against the Jews would be declared by all Islamic countries if Jewish immigration into Palestine continued. Within a month, this action and similar incitement from high quarters, coupled as they were with a violent anti-Jewish press campaign, bore fruit.

[579] On the Muslim holiday of Qurban Bairam, on November 18, an
563 infuriated mob, goaded on by a group of students, broke into the Great
668 Synagogue in Aleppo, smashed the candle burning in front of the Ark, battered some old Jews who were praying, and burnt the prayer books.

This was the signal for the outbreak of a general anti-Jewish campaign, made the worse by the incessant agitation carried on by nationalist orators among the Arab masses. There was the ugly murder of Jacques Franco, Assistant Headmaster of the *Alliance* School in Damascus. Suspicion that his death was the result of the prevailing unrest has never been entirely removed, even though there is insufficient evidence to prove it. There was the forcing of Rabbi Moshe Nahum, of the Jewish community of Jezirah, to make a statement protesting against Jewish immigration into Palestine. There was the humiliating spectacle of the heads of all three Jewish communities

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being compelled, in November, 1945, to take part in the demonstrations against the Balfour Declaration, and Jewish shopkeepers being ordered to close their shops as a sign of solidarity with the Muslims. However little concerned Syrian Jewry may have been with Zionist aspirations in Palestine, its feelings on the subject could hardly have been strong enough to cause its leaders—"of their own free will"—to announce that they intended to hold a banquet in honour of the notorious Fawzi Kaukji—a wartime officer of the German Waffen S.S.

Not even in Egypt did public hysteria against the helpless and isolated Jewish minority go to such lengths as it did in Syria. Doubtless this fact is due to the combination of a half-educated university youth and an illiterate, hungry, and disease-ridden urban populace. In Syria, as in Egypt, such a combination has given an extraordinarily explosive character to the nationalist movement.

When the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on the Palestine issue visited Syria, its members were struck by the cowed and intimidated manner of the heads of the Jewish community. One member of the committee, Mr. Bartley Crum, in his book *Behind the Silken Curtain* (p. 239), gives the following description of the scene when three representatives of the Jewish community arrived to give evidence:

> The committee of three chosen Jews appeared. Only one spoke. There had been testimony in Jerusalem before us by Oriental Jews charging that Jews in the Oriental countries were given only second-class citizenship. Our sub-committee expected the Jewish spokesman they now heard on the scene to need far more than 20 minutes to tell his story. Instead, he used 45 seconds of his allotted time. He raced through a one-sentence written statement, in which he said that the Jews of Syria were happy and not discriminated against; that their situation was excellent under the present Syrian Government; and that they had absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with Zionism. The three presented a picture of terrified men. . . .

The tragic farce of the repeated declarations of solidarity with the Muslims forced on the leaders of the Jewish community did not diminish the flood of persecution. Thus Shukri al-Quwatli, the President of the Syrian Republic, made no effort to halt anti-Jewish discrimination, even though in 1946 a Jewish delegation made special representations to him. On the contrary, in 1947, the Syrian Government promulgated new restrictions, prohibiting Jewish inhabitants from leaving their areas of residence.

The effect of this order was to paralyse even what remained of Jewish economic activity; and it should be noted that the order appeared even before the partition of Palestine was decided on by the United Nations.

Within four days of the United Nations decision being made public, the mob was sufficiently worked up for anti-Jewish rioting to break out in Aleppo. On December 2, 1947, a crowd, spurred on by agitators, burnt down the four big synagogues in the city plus

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14 smaller ones, and destroyed 150 houses. An unknown number of Jews was butchered to death.

By the time Palestine was invaded by the Arab States, the Jewish communities in Syria were completely isolated. No Jew dared to have any contacts abroad or, for that matter, with any foreigners resident in the country. Commercial activity came practically to a standstill, since Jews were forbidden to open their shops or to carry on with their employment.

The property of a transport company, owned by an Iraqi Jew, was confiscated, and the entire Jewish staff arrested. Fifteen Jewish girls who worked in the telephone exchanges in Aleppo and Damascus were dismissed. The Chief Engineer of Damascus, who had held this position for 12 years, suffered the same fate, together with five Jewish school teachers. The school building of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in Damascus was requisitioned for the military. The already impoverished community was forced under threat to donate about £S10,000 (at that time equivalent to £1,100) to the Arab funds.

Throughout the months of fighting, a relentless campaign demanding the confiscation of all Jewish property went on. The Damascus Jews felt themselves fortunate in being spared a repetition of the earlier Aleppo riots, though in August, 1949, 11 were killed when a bomb was thrown into a synagogue.

For some time the situation of the Jews in Damascus was extremely grave. Being prevented from earning a living, the community was so impoverished that it was feared that many would die of hunger and disease. Had it not been for the assistance of the Jewish community in Beirut, the Damascus community might well have perished. Later, their straits were further relieved by American help.

With the overthrow of the Syrian Government by Husni Zaim in March, 1949, all restrictions on the movements of Jews, as well as on the sale of property, were abolished. The new ruler declared that he would deal severely with any person attempting to discriminate against the Jews. The lifting of the travel ban was immediately followed by a new wave of Jewish emigration to Lebanon.

The confused situation arising out of Zaim's murder, and the succession of political *coups* which followed, make the prospects of the Jewish community uncertain. But even if the new Government were to abstain from any official discrimination against the Jews of Syria, the atmosphere has been poisoned to such an extent that a return to normal conditions and peaceful relations seems most unlikely. On the face of it, nothing will alter the passionate wish of practically every Jew in Syria to shake the country's dust off his feet.